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Testimony

As a high school student, I spend my days sitting in a classroom writing countless pages of notes, staring at a computer, and having classes that focus on taking tests. But, there is one period a day where my peers and I have an experience that provided high levels of thinking and problem solving. Here, I get to learn about how to manage a checking account, learn how to make a healthy meal and even make my own clothes. This is exactly what Family and Consumer Science classes offer students, the opportunity to develop skills that will prepare them for college and the workforce.

Good Afternoon. I am Kiran Kumaranayakum and this year I am serving as the National Vice President of Competitive Events for Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. I was nominated by our state associated and elected this past July.

Family and Consumer Sciences is a very broad field that is always evolving to meet the needs of students and provide diverse opportunities. There is always something new to learn and new skills to develop in FCS classes. FCS curriculum can include human development, food preparation and nutrition, financial literacy, interior design, parenting and much more.

My peers and I are here today to address the future of Family Consumer Sciences in New Jersey. As a member of the FCCLA National Executive Council, I have learned that in the states where my fellow council members reside there are post-secondary institutions that offer a major in Family Consumer Sciences. For example, the University of Georgia places high importance on FCS education by having the College of Family and Consumer Sciences within the University. New Jersey students are being forced to pay out of state for college tuition to pursue FCS because in post-secondary schools do not offer this opportunity. The outcome is shortage in FCS educators in New Jersey.

Good Afternoon! I am Aashraya Singiri, The Vice President of Public Relations and I am Samantha Matson, State President for NJ FCCLA.

The future for Family and Consumer Sciences and FCCLA is shaky because we are not graduating teachers to take over for retiring professionals. The average age for Family and Consumer Sciences teachers is 57 and this means retirements are on the horizon. With teachers retiring and nobody available to fill their shoes, the FCS programs will not

last long. FCCLA relies on Family and Consumer Sciences teachers to serve as chapter advisers. The result will be the demise of FCCLA in New Jersey. As adult leaders in education, you may not realize what a loss this will be to the students in our state. Family and Consumer Sciences is the classroom that works on our college and career readiness skills. As a junior in high school and I have learned so many amazing skills in FCS and FCCLA, I have learned that I love public speaking and I have learned how to make meals for my family and even alter my clothes. I have learned time management, and many other skills that have benefited me far beyond the classroom. FCCLA has given me the opportunity to participate in competitive events where I have grown academically and personally. Through FCCLA I have realized I love student government and am now hoping to pursue a career in law and government. Being a part of FCCLA has been a big part of who I am and has helped me plan my future.

If Family and Consumer Sciences classes fail to exist, not only would students be lacking an opportunity to develop the necessary life skills for success, it also denies students the chance to be a part of the organization Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. FCCLA enables students to develop their leadership skills, prepare for college and careers, and train for life in the real world. It provides students with knowledge that they would not have gained anywhere else, allows them to reach their full potential, and head into their future prepared. FCS and FCCLA specialize in developing 21st Century skills such as communication, problem solving, time management, goals setting and many more.

It is extremely important that New Jersey does not neglect students with a passion for Family and Consumer Sciences. It is extremely important that the foundational skills that FCS offers stay relevant in secondary schools. In addition, FCS students deserve the opportunity to study Family and Consumer Sciences in our state. New Jersey must reconsider providing opportunities for FCS in post-secondary institutions.